

# HOMELESSNESS IN NICEVILLE



## **Confidential Instructions for the Chair of the Niceville Homeowners Association**

As the Chair of the Niceville Homeowners Association your job at this meeting is to press the point that the overall goal of the grant is to improve Niceville as a city. The solution to homelessness is to attract new business and build up the local economy so that everyone can have decent jobs. More police protection is important, too. The community fears the homeless that live in shelters. Stricter enforcement of the panhandling ordinance is also very important. As the former mayor of Niceville you understand how complicated the homeless issue is. It is important to take some action to help solve the homeless problems of Niceville, but the root of the problem is the visibility of the homeless in town. Both the Third Avenue Service Center and the Homeless Union's Straley Park food service are eyesores.

The association has two priorities. The food service run by the Homeless Union should be moved out of Straley Park to a different site so the park can be cleaned up. The Third Avenue Service Center building should be renovated. The Association is willing to provide \$50,000 toward the renovation.

You are dead set against creating new shelters in the neighborhoods. This town already has a shelter with enough capacity for the homeless population. The former school building should be used for a community center. Expanding the present shelter is undesirable but is an acceptable trade-off if the renovation of the building could be completed.

Your group is against a shelter run by homeless because empowering the mentally ill and substance abusers can be dangerous. Many of the homeless are dysfunctional and should be cared for by professionals. However, you approve of the Homeless Union's use of discipline and self-reliance.

The Ledbetter Foundation has done lots of good work in the community, but the homeless issue is outside of its expertise. The foundation should be concerned with broad community issues, not just homelessness.

The school cannot be used as the site of a new shelter. It is located in a residential neighborhood. It should be used as a community center. The Community Service League is doing good work, but it does not represent a large proportion of the Niceville population.



The governor's Task Force on Homelessness was set up primarily to appease the Homeless Union and represents the governor's political interests, not necessarily the economic interests of Niceville. It is important that you try to convince the Task Force director that the association represents an important constituency for the Governor. You should try to have a private discussion early in the meeting with the Task Force director to get assurances that there will be no new shelters or beds. You will accept ten new beds at the Third Avenue Service Center, but only if renovations are completed.